

The Evening Bulletin.

DANIEL LOGAN, Editor.

TUESDAY, MAY 25, 1897.

THE JAPANESE QUESTION.

Minister Shimamura is quoted in an interview as complaining that the Hawaiian Government gave out for publication the communications between his Government and itself. Also that this was done before he had received its reply to the communication he had presented. It appears that there was an unanticipated delay of an hour or two in transmitting the document from the Foreign Office to the Japanese Legation, and in the meantime the afternoon papers had been issued with an outline of its contents and of the Japanese note to which it was a reply. The whole facts, however, show that the Hawaiian Government was not the leader in making divulgence. Newspapers in the confidence of the Japanese Government were, at the departure of the Naniwa for Honolulu, given a much fuller summary of Japan's official complaint than the Hawaiian Minister of Foreign Affairs gave yesterday to the BULLETIN, either of that document or of his response to it. This Government had received newspapers with some of the actual language of the Japanese communication even before the document was presented to it by Minister Shimamura. Notwithstanding this example of diplomatic etiquette from its great and good friend Japan, this Government would probably have maintained its usual reticence in such things were it not that a mail steamer was about to leave for the Coast. It was very desirable that, when the issue had been joined between the two governments, a correct summary of its consistency should have gone abroad to the world and as coming from the Hawaiian Government. There is not the least doubt that a full statement of the case, with the authority of the Japanese Legation, would have gone forward anyway by the steamer Belgic due to leave for Japan this week, besides a succinct cable message by the Peru leaving yesterday. Representatives of official organs of Japan are not here merely for recreation. At all events, when summaries of the Japanese complaint reached Honolulu in newspapers as soon as the official from the Foreign Office at Tokio, having charge of the message, it does not appear that Hawaii is the party that initiated waivers of etiquette in the matter.

Leaving these petty side issues, however, with the proposition that the public of each country has a right to be informed of the facts when a definite stage, such as the present, has been reached, a few words on the main question are in order. It is safe to say that when the origin of the controversy becomes clear to the world, the universal verdict will be that Hawaii's administration of its immigration laws, as applied to the Japanese, is founded not only upon strict equity but the first law of all, that is, self-preservation. Perfectly true it is that Hawaii voluntarily invited Japanese immigration to replenish its labor supply. Also, that long prior to that invitation—even nearly a generation before any other western nation had a like basis of intercourse come into effect—the subjects of either country had full rights of entry, travel, residence and trade in the other country. It is needless to say, however, that under these fraternal relations there was no "peaceful invasion" on either side. When the labor convention was made at a much later period, large numbers of Japanese were landed in Hawaii under three-year labor

contracts. These were under permission but not obligation—as has ignorantly been stated of late, especially in newspapers abroad—to return to Japan at the close of their contracts. Provision of a fund to pay their passages home out of their own wages was made in the conventional arrangements. Those who stayed here were not obliged to recontract, as also has erroneously been published, having the treaty right of residence. While a considerable proportion went home, from time to time, a large majority remained, and the immigration was continued as the large employers of labor here made requisition for recruits. So the process went on until about the beginning of the present controversy some 25,000 in round numbers of the 109,000 population of Hawaii were Japanese. Thus far the question was one purely between the Government and the citizens of Hawaii, and it was a question as to how far the process of introducing a single alien nationality might proceed consistent with the safety of Hawaii's existing national integrity. It is to be recalled here that the wholesale introduction of Japanese labor was adopted as a substitute for Chinese immigration that, with its undue preponderance of males, had come to be regarded as a menace to Hawaiian civilization.

Just prior to the war between China and Japan a serious question had approached a head regarding the Japanese in Hawaii. It was a claim that, under the most favored nation clause of the treaty, Japanese residents who could exhibit the qualifications of voters were entitled to the electoral suffrage and full citizenship. This question is probably what first crystallized public opinion in the conviction that the Chinese menace had only been succeeded by the more dangerous Japanese menace. For, if the point were conceded, it would have been only the beginning of the end of transforming Hawaii into a Japanese state. When the existence of the citizenship question had become notorious, it was emphasized by the appearance in Honolulu harbor of two powerful vessels of Japan's new navy. It is but stating what is regarded as patent fact to assert that a grave crisis was only averted through the calling off of these "dogs of war" to engage in the fight with China. At all events the Government decided to check the process of "Japanning" the islands by limiting labor immigration from Japan. For a time the granting of requisitions for Japanese labor was suspended, but it was resumed under a condition that ten percent of the entire labor immigration, for supplying the agricultural demand, should be of European or white races.

All along Japanese labor immigration had been conducted mainly under Government auspices, subject to regulations of the Board of Immigration which provided for three-year contracts. There had been a considerable proportion of free immigration coming both in emigrant and regular mail line steamers. This free element was only restricted by the conditions imposed upon alien immigrants of all nationalities. Latterly, but not with especial reference to the Japanese, these conditions were made more stringent by a law that included, among other things, the requirement that everyone entering the country should be the bona fide possessor of fifty dollars in money. Labor immigrants who came under condition of entering into contracts to labor, which had previously been approved by the Board of Immigration, were exempted from this condition of showing down fifty dollars. A large number of emi-

gration companies were formed in Japan and established agencies in Honolulu, which, under the stimulus of lucrative profits in the business of recruiting and furnishing laborers to the Hawaiian planters, invented schemes for evading the moderate and reasonable restrictions and safeguards of the Board of Immigration. They engaged laborers in Japan under the promise of three year contracts, that in some cases were actually drawn up and executed in Japan. These they furnished with advances of \$50 each to show the port authorities in Hawaii but to be returned to the real owners of the money when the purpose had been effected. Another scheme was to have the emigrants on arrival here, when refused admission for lack of bona fide or actual possession of the fifty dollars, to volunteer to enter into regular Board of Immigration contracts. The authorities here ruled strictly on the matter of fifty dollars, but received a setback by a decision of the Supreme Court that virtually denied them the right to go behind the actual exhibition of the money. As to the other scheme the Government was very accommodating in some few of the earlier cases. It assumed that the emigrants were innocent parties and admitted them on their taking contracts with planters who requested their services. Public dissatisfaction at these modes of practical abolition of all restrictions was strongly manifested, and the Government being predisposed to take the same view of the matter as the public determined to adopt fresh measures. Here it may be said that the general alien immigration law was made a complete nullity, so far as that race was concerned, if Japanese equipped with the requisite advances belonging to the emigration companies might swarm into the country. Such contracts as they had made in Japan were not worth the paper they were written upon, either for holding them to service in this country or for securing them the wholesome protection of their own rights guaranteed by the Board of Immigration's contracts. The Government repeated its refusal of advanced money Japanese, and, when the cases were brought before the Supreme Court on writs of habeas corpus, it made a plea that had not been presented on the occasion of the adverse decision. This was that which had availed regarding Chinese restriction in the United States, namely, that the executive officers of this Government had ultimate authority in deciding who among aliens seeking admission to the country might be admitted under our immigration laws. With this plea was the correlative one that until aliens were regularly admitted to the country they had no standing in its courts and therefore the writ of habeas corpus to override the decision of the executive authorities could not lie in their case. These pleas were adjudged well taken by the Supreme Court, and upon its decision the sending back home of Japanese was done, which furnishes the ground of the present complaint of the Japanese Government.

Japan, in taking the ground she is seen to have done, that our immigration laws, applying as they do equally to all nationalities, are in derogation of the treaty, assumes a position so preposterous that it cannot fail to be discountenanced by all nations that treasure their own independence.

An article from the New York Sun reprinted on another page hits the nail on the head, when it argues that the control avowed by the United States over Hawaii carries with it responsibilities. Specific reference is had to the Japanese question.

SENSIBLE IDEA.

At least one native paper in Japan takes a sensible view of emigration to Hawaii as it has been conducted. It is quoted by an English paper of that country as follows:

The Sekai-no-Nippon has some startling comments on the present system of Japanese coolie emigration, which it stigmatizes as not much different from slavery, and declares that the present mode of emigration must be radically changed or stopped altogether. Laborers who emigrate under contracts, bound by pecuniary transactions with agents, are slaves for the term they accept. The selling of a man's labor for a fixed period amounts to the selling of the man's self; for his whole life, his health, movements, occupations, pleasures and even freedom are all fettered in that particular mode of bargain, therefore the so called Japanese emigrants are nothing more or less than slaves. It can never be reconciled to the true principles of national progress and expansion to send out ignorant laborers who when they have saved a little money and served out the fixed term, are only eager to come back home. Nor can the sending of such a low class of people be called true emigration. Therefore if the Government is really desirous to encourage emigration on a sound basis, it must put a stop to this "slave traffic," for otherwise Japan will be sure to incur the contempt of other nations.

AMUSEMENTS.

The Goddard Lectures.—The second of the Goddard lectures was given last night before an audience which was thoroughly in accord with the lecturer and listened to his splendid descriptions of the art of brewing "Rainier" beer. He remarked that only the best of hops and malt were used thus insuring a healthful beverage. On tap or in bottles at the Criterion saloon.

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Honolulu, April 20, 1897.
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